

"WANTED, A YOUNG LADY"—

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

W. E. SUTER,

AUTHOR OF

The Pirates of the Savannah, Idiot of the Mountain, Syren of Paris,
Angel of Midnight, Old House on the Bridge, Outlaw of the Adriatic,
Sarah's Young Man, A Quiet Family, John Wopps, Rifle Volunteer,
Brother Bill and Me, Highwayman's Holiday, Accusing
Spirit, First Love, Our New Men, Fan-fan, the
Tulip, &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

"WANTED, A YOUNG LADY."

Characters.

ADELAIDE STIRLING (*First Comedy*)

FRANK MITCHELL (*First Comedy*)

SIMON SNOOZLE (*Low Comedy*)

Costumes.

FRANK. *First Dress*—Travelling suit. *Second*—Old lady's hood, silk gown, shawl, spectacles, and stick. *Third*—Same as first.

SIMON. *First Dress*—Half livery. *Second*—Velvet cap and silk dressing gown.

ADELAIDE. *First Dress*—Travelling dress. *Second*—Silk bonnet, veil, spectacles, shawl, and stick.

Time in Representation—40 Minutes.

“WANTED, A YOUNG LADY”—

SCENE.—Interior of an old Country Mansion ; door, C; door, R; door L.; easy chairs ; couch, L.; fire-place, R.; clock, C.; chairs, &c.; table, R., on it a lighted lamp ; closet at back, L.

SIMON. (*entering, door C.*) Yes, yes, godfather, make your mind easy, you may sleep quietly on both sides of your face. (*advancing*) That's a saying in our parts ; but I have tried it, and I couldn't do it. (*looking at clock*) Seven o'clock ! what a litter this room is in. (*placing chairs, &c.*) And look here. (*indicating clothes scattered over an easy chair*) What's all this ? Oh, old master's morning gown. (*places it in the closet*) I have an idea that this place of mine suits me very well. I am boarded and lodged and washed, eight pounds a year, and the key of the cellar. I fancy I shall soon get my nose red in this house. (*sits*) This here easy chair is uncommon comfortable.

FRANK. (*entering, C. door, a portmanteau in his hand*) I don't see a soul about. (*seeing SIMON*) Eh ! halloa, my friend ! (*shaking him*) What are you doing there ?

SIMON. (*all aback*) Me, sir ! I—I'm a doing my work.

FRANK. Doing what ?

SIMON. (*rising*) What do you please to want ?

FRANK. I wish to see Mr. or Mrs. Mitchell.

SIMON. Oh ! either of them would do, then ?

FRANK. (L. C.) Yes.

SIMON. (R. C.) That's lucky, for they are both gone out.

FRANK. Out ! then I will await their return.

SIMON. I don't think you will, sir.

FRANK. How do you mean ?

SIMON. Why, when master and missus went away this morning, they said they were going on a visit, and should be away nine or ten days—and the same number of nights too, no doubt.

FRANK. (*aside*) Pleasant information ! all this distance from London, and not a shilling in my pocket. (*to SIMON*) Are you alone here ?

SIMON. Yes, I'm quite alone in the house, except my godfather, who lives at the bottom of the garden.

FRANK. The surly old brute I met in the park ?

SIMON. Yes, that's godfather.

FRANK. Agreeable society ! Well, I must teach myself resignation. (*offering portmanteau*) Go and prepare a chamber for me.

SIMON. You are labouring under a mistake, sir ; the Golden Lion is on the other side of—

FRANK. Ah, true ! you do not know me. I am Fra—
(*checking himself*) No, I mean Harry Mitchell, your master's grandson.

SIMON. Really ! well, how lucky ! I have a letter for your brother.

FRANK. For my brother Frank ?

SIMON. Yes, here it is. (*drawing a letter from his pocket*) I have been ordered to post it.

FRANK. (*aside*) I know what are its contents—the old story—you are a good-for-nothing fellow, and I shall not give you a sixpence. (*aloud, taking letter and putting it into his pocket*) All right, I will take care he has it.

SIMON. And so you are Master Harry, eh ? You are the favourite, you are.

FRANK. How did you learn that ?

SIMON. Godfather has made me acquainted with all the family matters, for I am quite fresh, I am.

FRANK. You are quite fresh ! what do you mean ?

SIMON. I mean I was quite new this morning. Godfather brought me here and showed me to your grandmother just as she was stepping into the old family coach ; she had only just time to say, " Oh ! this is the stupid animal you have told me about." You see, she is so old that she doesn't always know what she is talking about.

FRANK. I think, though, her faculties were pretty clear this morning. But, as you say, she is rather old—eighty-two. Considerably wrinkled, I should think.

SIMON. Her face is just like a little apple that has been dried in the sun.

FRANK. And my grandfather ?

SIMON. He is like a little pear that has been baked in an oven.

FRANK. I am certain I should not recognize them ; they must be very dull here, all by themselves.

SIMON. Godfather says that they sometimes yawn till they get a lock-jaw ; that's why they have just advertised in the papers for somebody to read to them.

FRANK. Read to them !

SIMON. Yes, a young lady.

FRANK. (*quickly*) Ah, there is a young lady here ?

SIMON. No, sir, she hasn't come yet.

FRANK. What a pity !

SIMON. And they won't want a young lady now they have engaged me.

FRANK. (*laughing*) But you are not a young lady.

SIMON. No, and I can't read, but——

FRANK. Idiot ! go and prepare my chamber.

SIMON. (*going, l.*) Yes, Master Harry.

FRANK. Stop a moment ; is there anything to eat in the pantry ?

SIMON. I saw the plate chest there ; but I'll go and see, Master Harry. Ah ! if you were Mr. Frank.

FRANK. Well ?

SIMON. I shouldn't be able to find anything. (*confidentially*) Godfather says that you are a pet, and that your brother is a bad lot ; old folks won't have him at any price.

FRANK. (*aside*) I know it but too well. (*aloud*) You will find some cigars in my portmanteau, with my pipe and tobacco. Stay ; have you got the keys of the cellar ?

SIMON. Yes, sir.

FRANK. Then bring me some champagne.

SIMON. I will. (*aside*) He'll help me, I can see, to redder my nose !

Exit, with portmanteau, door, l.

FRANK. Have I done well to present myself here under my brother's name, because I know their great preference for him, and that they treat me like a Cinderella of the male sex. This is the way I discovered that I was no favourite ; one day I wrote to them for money, and didn't get it ; while Harry, who had also written for some, did : then I questioned myself as to what I had done, and as to what I had not done. I said to myself, it is nearly twelve years since Harry and I quitted the old people ; we are of the same figure, considerably resemble each other ; I could easily impose upon my grandmother, who is nearly blind, and ditto upon my grandfather, who is quite deaf, and so I will go to them and say here is your darling Harry, and express my willingness to receive as much money as they choose to give me ; if my brother were to write I should be there to suppress his letters. Wasn't that a clever idea ? not particularly honest, but remarkably clever ; that will teach parents to have a preference, to all respectable grandfathers one grandson is as good as another.

Enter ADELAIDE, door, c., a cloak over her arm, a small carpet bag in her hand.

ADELAIDE. Mrs. Mitchell, if you please, sir.

FRANK. (l. c.) Yes, this is her house, but she is gone from home for nine or ten days.

ADELA. (R. C.) How unfortunate! And Mr. Mitchell?

FRANK. That's me. I am Mr. Mitchell; Fra—I mean Harry Mitchell.

ADELA. (*aside*) Harry! It is he!

FRANK. Will you have the goodness to take a seat?

ADELA. I thank you. But the Mr. Mitchell of whom I asked you is the husband of Mrs. Mitchell, and I do not suppose that—

FRANK. No, certainly; I have not married my grandmother, that sort of thing is not allowed, you know. (*aside*) She is deucedly pretty. (*aloud*) Will you have the goodness to take a seat?

ADELA. Then your grandfather is also absent.

FRANK. For nine or ten days. I am quite alone here, but that makes no difference. (*again offering chair*) Will you have the goodness to—

ADELA. No, thank you. I believe I cannot do better than make my way back to the railway station, and return to London. (*going up*)

FRANK. (*following and bringing her back*) But, excuse me, may I be allowed to enquire—

ADELA. I believed I had been recommended to them by Mr. Dunstable, as a companion to—

FRANK. Certainly, quite correct. (*aside*) She mustn't go, I want a companion, dreadfully. (*aloud*) They are expecting you, madam, very impatiently, I assure you!

ADELA. Well, but, since they are not at home—

FRANK. Certainly, will you allow me to—(*he takes her cloak and carpet bag*) They are in the park, they take a little walk there every evening, but they will be back directly; will you have the goodness to— (*taking a chair and seating himself close beside her*)

ADELA. (*shifting her chair, aside*) This Mr. Harry is very forward. (*aloud*) And you think, sir, that I shall suit your grandmother?

FRANK. Certainly, you will suit her nicely—and you will suit my grandmother capitally—and you will suit my grandfather capitally—and you suit me beautifully—and you will suit my brother deli—

ADELA. Ah, you have a brother?

FRANK. Yes, Harry—hem, no—I mean, Frank—I am Harry.

ADELA. But, according to what Mr. Dunstable told me, one of you is a very bad fellow.

FRANK. It isn't me; I assure you, it's my brother.

ADELA. Are you quite certain?

FRANK. Quite certain that I am not my brother—oh, yes. But, after all, Frank is really a capital fellow; he is, I assure

you, I like him very much; I do, indeed—may have been a little wild, but—

ADELA. Pardon me, sir, but your grandmother does not return.

FRANK. She is taking a little walk in the park, and perhaps her corns are troublesome—she has several, besides two or three bunions! but perhaps she has come in and gone to bed—she is subject to—to—to the whooping cough—

ADELA. The what, sir?

FRANK. (*aside*) Confound it! I can't think of—(*aloud*) I mean the gout—and she always goes to bed early when—but you will see her to-morrow.

ADELA. (*taking her portmanteau from FRANK's hand*) To-morrow? in that case I will go to the Golden Lion Hotel, which is near the railway station.

FRANK. (*again taking portmanteau from her hand*) No, no—grandmother would be so angry—she has caused a chamber to be prepared for you.

ADELA. Indeed!

FRANK. Yes, and supper, for she thought you would arrive late.

Enter SIMON, L. door.

SIMON. The chamber is ready, sir.

FRANK. (*to ADELAIDE*) There, you hear! what did I tell you? (*to SIMON*) Very well.

SIMON. (*L., aside*) Eh? that woman is a female!

FRANK. (*to SIMON*) And the supper?

ADELA. Thank you, but I am not hungry.

SIMON. The supper is ready, too. (*aside to FRANK*) But, sir—

FRANK. (*giving him a sly kick*) Be quiet!

ADELA. (*taking her cloak and portmanteau from FRANK*) I will go to my apartment. (*L., to SIMON*) I beg you will let me know immediately that Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell have returned from their walk?

SIMON. (*C., astonished*) Eh, returned from their walk?

FRANK. (*kicking as before, and crossing to L. C.*) Hold your tongue. (*to ADELAIDE*) Oh, yes, directly they return, you may depend on that. *Exit ADELAIDE, L. door.*

SIMON. (*R. C.*) But, sir, if that young lady is going to wait till the old people return—

FRANK. (*C.*) Hold your tongue. (*aside*) She mustn't go, she is a charming creature, and I have fallen head over ears in love with her—she, the companion of a couple of old fogies—I mean, my honoured grand-parents. (*aloud*) Simon!

SIMON. Sir!

FRANK. I want my grandfather's morning gown.

SIMON. His morning gown?

FRANK. Yes; don't say he doesn't wear one, all old fogies—grandfathers, I mean—wear a morning gown.

SIMON. (*going to closet*) Very well, sir. (*bringing morning gown forward*) Here it is, sir!

FRANK. Very well! try it on directly.

SIMON. Me?

FRANK. Yes, you—make haste!

SIMON. (*putting on morning gown*) Perhaps you are going to make me a present of one like it, and want to see if it will fit.

FRANK. Perhaps.

SIMON. I'd rather have a coat, with nice long tails.

FRANK. (*hunting in closet*) Here, now put on this cap. (*giving him morning cap*)

SIMON. Well, but—

FRANK. No observations; put the cap on, or I discharge you. (*pulls the cap down over SIMON's eyes*)

SIMON. Don't—I will!

FRANK. Now, muffle your face up—good—turn about, walk, not like that, stoop—bend your back—that's it! Now, where is grandmother's chamber? (*seeing ADELAIDE—who enters, door, L.*) Hush! here she is!

SIMON. (R. C.—*frightened*) Your grandmother?

FRANK. (C.) Don't stir!

ADELA. (*aside*) I know not why, but I felt frightened while in that great apartment. (*seeing SIMON*) Ah!

FRANK. Miss—hem—miss—ah! here is my grandfather, he has just returned—

SIMON. (*aside—looking about*) His grandfather, where is he?

ADELA. (L. C.—*curtseying*) Sir!

FRANK. (*making signs to SIMON*) Grandfather, this is the companion of whom I have just told you.

SIMON. (*astonished—to FRANK*) What, me!

FRANK. (*aside—to him*) Hold your tongue, or I'll break your back. (*shouting*) The female companion. (*to ADELAIDE*) He is dreadfully deaf; but that is not astonishing at his age—ninety-three—yes, I assure you, he is ninety-three!

SIMON. Oh! really, sir—

FRANK. Hold your tongue, or be killed! (*shouting*) You are very tired, sit down, dear grandfather. (*to ADELAIDE*) The very shortest walk fatigues him, and no wonder, for as I said before, he is ninety-seven, and—(*pushing SIMON violently into easy chair*) Sit down, dear grandfather! (*aside to him*) Sit down, you brute, and say your wife will be back directly!

SIMON. (*astonished*) My wife will be back directly.

FRANK. (*to ADELAIDE*) He says his wife will be back directly.

ADELA. Very well, sir ; I will wait.

FRANK. She is still in the park—grandfather's legs are so weak—to say nothing that he has the rheumatism ; but, you know, an old soldier——

SIMON. (*aside*) Now I am an old soldier !

ADELA. Ah ! your grandfather has served 'n——

FRANK. Certainly ! (*to SIMON*) Grandfather, the young lady asks if you have served. (*aside—to him*) Why don't you answer ?

SIMON. Oh ! yes, yes ! I'm in service now !

FRANK. (*punching him slyly*) You jackass !

ADELA. What did he say ?

FRANK. Oh ! nothing—don't mind him—he isn't always quite right in his head—rather idiotic sometimes.

ADELA. Poor old gentleman.

SIMON. (*aside*) Now I'm an idiot !

FRANK. His great age, as I said before, ninety-nine, you know ! (*to SIMON*) As you say that grandmother is on her way home, you had better go and meet her.

ADELA. How ! fatigued as he is, and at his age to go alone——

FRANK. Exactly ! Surely, at his age, he is old enough to go alone !

ADELA. No, no ; go you, and I will stay here and bear your grandfather company.

FRANK. (*aside*) The devil ! leave them together. (*aloud*) Why, you see——

ADELA. I entreat you, the air is so chilly, and as he is suffering with the rheumatism——

FRANK. Ah, true ! (*shouting to SIMON*) Don't stir ! this young lady will keep you company——

SIMON. (*aside to FRANK*) And I shouldn't at all mind keeping company with her.

FRANK. (*punching him slyly*) Must I murder you ?

SIMON. No, you mustn't.

FRANK. (*aside to him*) Mind that to everything she says, you answer only, "My wife will be back directly."

SIMON. Yes, sir.

FRANK. (*to ADELAIDE*) Now I'm off to fetch grandmother.

Exit, c. door.

ADELA. (*looking after FRANK*) That, then, is the Mr. Harry of whom I have heard so much from my sister. He is not at all bad-looking ; but with all his good looks, he is a very worthless fellow.

SIMON. (*coughing*) Hum ! hum !

ADELA. Oh ! I was quite forgetting the old gentleman. (*going to SIMON*) There, place your feet on that. (*giving him a footstool*) Now, are you comfortable ?

SIMON. My wife will be back directly.

ADELA. You are not cold?

SIMON. (*taking a pinch of snuff*) My wife will be back directly.

ADELA. There is a draught from this side—ah! this cushion. (*places a cushion at his back*)

SIMON. (*aside*) Isn't she tucking me up nicely! it's rather pleasant to be old—atchieu! (*sneezing*)

ADELA. Heaven bless you!

SIMON. My wife will be back directly.

ADELA. He is dear as a post. (*to herself*) Yes, Mr. Harry is a scamp; but luckily, we had for neighbour that good man, Mr. Dunstable. (*shouting to SIMON*) Your friend Dunstable.

SIMON. My wife will be—

ADELA. (*interrupting him*) Yes, yes, I know! And when he learned Mr. Harry's conduct to my dear sister Jane, the idea occurred to him to send me here as a companion to—"Go to their house," he said, "you will see Mrs. Mitchell, not her husband, he—"

SIMON. My wife will be—

ADELA. (*turning towards SIMON*) "He counts for nothing, but his wife—"

SIMON. Back directly.

ADELA. "You will tell her all, and I have no doubt she will arrange the marriage, and—"

SIMON. (*aside*) What is she going on about? (*aloud*) Hem! hem!

ADELA. Did you speak?

SIMON. My wife will be back directly.

ADELA. Poor old gentleman! his intellect appears quite shattered. (*shouting*) I suppose you retire to rest very early?

SIMON. My wife will be back directly.

FRANK. (*without, in an assumed voice*) Very well, I shall find her.

ADELA. That voice! Mrs. Mitchell, no doubt.

SIMON. (*aside, frightened*) Grandmother! then I'm booked! (*about to bolt off, R. door, is met by FRANK, who enters, C. door, dressed as an old lady*)

FRANK. (*stopping SIMON*) Eh! where are you hobbling to? (*aside to SIMON, in natural voice*) If you don't keep still—

SIMON. (*R., aside, amazed*) Eh! Mr. Harry!

ADELA. (*L., curtseying*) Madam—

FRANK. (*C., to ADELAIDE*) Ah! there you are, little darling; my grandson told me just now that—

SIMON. (*sinking again into easy chair, R. C.*) My wife will be back directly.

ADELA. I am sorry, madam, to have interrupted your walk.

FRANK. I was coming home, for the dew is beginning to fall.

SIMON. (*aside*) I wish my wages were falling due—I can't stand this.

FRANK. (*patting ADELAIDE's cheeks*) Ah! what a pretty little creature—ah! what is your name, poppet?

ADELA. Adelaide.

FRANK. Ah! my name is Selina Matilda. You found Mr. Mitchell very dull company, didn't you? Wait a minute—I'll send him to bed. (*shouting*) Philomel! Philomel! (*aside to SIMON, and giving him a sly punch*) Why don't you answer, you brute?

SIMON. Oh, is that me?

FRANK. Go to bed, my cherished love. (*aside to him*) Be off, you beast! (*aloud*) I will assist you as far as your chamber. Come, dear love. (*raising SIMON from chair*)

SIMON. (*aside to him*) Do you mean it?

FRANK. Of course I do. (*kicking him slyly*) Idiot!

SIMON. Oh! I say, that hurts, you know.

FRANK. (*leading him towards door, R.*) Come, cherished husband of my youth—worshipped of my old age. (*seeing ADELAIDE is not looking*) Get out, you hippopotamus! (*giving him a violent kick and bundling him off violently, door, R.*)

ADELA. (*turning at the noise*) What was that?

FRANK. Nothing—my poor husband knocked his head against the door post, that's all. (*aside*) What a charming little creature she is! Now, tell me, my love, who sent you here?

ADELA. Oh, you know perfectly well, your friend, Mr. Dunstable.

FRANK. Ah, to be sure. I hope Mr. Constable is quite well.

ADELA. Dunstable—yes, madam.

FRANK. And his wife?

ADELA. His wife! Why he has been a widower for the last fifteen years.

FRANK. (*aside*) Phew! (*aloud*) Ah, to be sure, she is dead, then she is quite well.

(*singing*) When we are dead it's for a long time,

Says the old adage with wisdom ripe;

When we are dead it's for a long time,

And we're cured of the tooth-ache for all our life.

(*laughing*) He, he, he! you will soon see, my dear, that I am a very gay old lady.

ADELA. I see that already!

FRANK. My duck, I suppose you have a sweetheart?

ADELA. A sweetheart?

FRANK. You needn't mind telling me, I'm an old woman,

you know; you are young and pretty. Ah, when I was your age, I pledge you my word I was a beauty.

ADELA. No doubt of it, madam.

FRANK. Ah, on the day of my marriage with Mr. Mitchell—and that reminds me, I want my supper.

ADELA. The table is already laid yonder. I will bring it to this room.

FRANK. Wait for me, my love; I'll assist you. (*toddles to door, L., and he and ADELADE bring on table ready served; they place the table, C., and sit; ADELADE is moving the lamp nearer to FRANK*)

FRANK. (R. of table) No, no, don't do that, my dear, my eyes are so weak; why here is only one plate and knife and fork.

ADELA. (L. of table) It doesn't matter, I have no appetite.

FRANK. Nor I. (*filling glasses*) but a glass of wine—

ADELA. No, thank you.

FRANK. I must. (*drinks*) I require several glasses to cheer the cockles of my aged heart. (*fills again and drinks*)

ADELA. (aside) What a strange old lady. (aloud, seeing them on table) Eh! a pipe and tobacco!

FRANK. Yes, my love; my medical man orders me to smoke, because my poor husband has got the rheumatism. (*filling his pipe*) but if you object—

ADELA. Oh, dear, no; not at all.

FRANK. (*lighting his pipe and smoking*) Ah, it's a great comfort for an aged creetur! (*rising*) Come here, my love.

ADELA. (*rising and going to him*) Yes, madam.

FRANK. I like you, my dear, and I'll be a mother to you—kiss me, my darling. (*putting his arm round her waist and kissing her*)

ADELA. (*starting*) Eh?

FRANK. What's the matter?

ADELA. (*hesitating, and rubbing her cheek*) 'Tis very strange, but—

FRANK. (aside) Oh, I forgot I hadn't shaved to-day.

ADELA. One would really think—oh, how you open your eyes and stare—

FRANK. (*resuming his natural voice*) The better to see you with, my dear.

ADELA. (*frightened*) That voice!

FRANK. The better to tell you that I love you—my dear—

ADELA. A man! who are you?

FRANK. One who adores you! I am Frank—I mean Harry Mitchell. (*advancing to her, she eludes him and runs over to R.*)

ADELA. Oh, wretch, villain! oh, oh, oh! I am very ill—oh, oh! (*falls into chair*)

FRANK. (*running about*) Oh, curse it ! here's a mess I've made of it.

ADELA. Oh, oh !

FRANK. What must I do ?—bite her finger, I suppose !

ADELA. Oh, salts, vinegar !

FRANK. Yes, yes—oh, I wonder where grandmother keeps her salt and vinegar ! *Runs off, L. door*—ADELAIDE jumps up, runs to the door and bolts it behind him—SIMON enters, R. door, tipsy, a bottle in his hand, and still wearing the morning gown and cap.

SIMON. (*singing*) Grief is a folly,

We'll sing and be jolly !

ADELA. Mr. Mitchell, in that dreadful state !

SIMON. Where are you, Mr. Sir ? it's me, Simon—you must wait upon yourself—I'm going to bed.

ADELA. (*aside*) Simon ! the servant, ah, I understand. (*aloud, to SIMON*) Oh, it is you, is it ?

SIMON. (*aside*) The young lady ! (*dropping into easy chair and acting the old man again*) My wife will be back directly—

ADELA. (*pulling him from chair*) Yes ; and Mr. Mitchell will also be back directly.

SIMON. (*frightened and placing the bottle on easy chair*) Mr. Mitchell !

ADELA. (C.) And I will tell him all !

SIMON. (*on his knees*) Don't ! I shall lose my place, before I have had time to redden my nose—'tisn't my fault—it's the keys of the cellar did it—and Mr. Harry——

ADELA. It was he who made you thus disguise yourself—confess and I forgive you !

SIMON. (*rising*) Yes ; he arrived this evening, on a visit to his grandfather and grandmother, whom he hasn't seen for twelve years ; and as they went away this morning——

ADELA. He hasn't encountered them ?

SIMON. How was he to do it, I should like to know.

ADELA. And you say that 'tis twelve years since——

SIMON. Yes !

ADELA. 'Tis well ! now you go to the park gate, and you will ring as if your mistress had returned.

SIMON. My wife will be back directly—but as she is gone away——

ADELA. No matter; obey me, or I tell all. (*door, L., is violently shaken*) There he is—open yonder door—now, Mr. Harry, we shall see ! (*runs off, door, R.—shaking at, door, L., continues*)

SIMON. (*staggering across*) Don't be in a hurry—don't be in a hurry ! (*unbolts door, L.—FRANK darts on with scent bottle, which he rams against SIMON'S nose*)

FRANK. Sniff—sniff! and then swallow it—eh? (*looking round*) Where is she?

SIMON. Here I am, sir.

FRANK. (*crossing to R.*) The young lady that I left here fainting.

SIMON. (*looking round*) Eh? yes, she is gone.

FRANK. (*trying R. door*) Fastened! (*looking at Simon*) Go to bed, wretch! (*placing scent bottle on table*)

SIMON. (*taking cushion from easy chair*) Let me get my pillow.

FRANK. Horribly drunk!

SIMON. I was just now, but it's evaporating.

FRANK. Go out into the air.

SIMON. (*going*) Yes, I'll go to the park gate, and go to bed.

FRANK. Be off!

SIMON. (*returning*) Stop a bit—I haven't got my nightcap. (*takes bottle from easy chair*)

FRANK. (*pushing him off*) Begone, drunken brute!

SIMON goes off, C. door, carrying cushion and bottle.

I have behaved like a ruffian to that charming creature—I must obtain her forgiveness, for I doat upon her—never was in love before, and the novel sensation is so delightful that—(*tapping at R. door*) Adelaide—Miss Adelaide—charming Adelaide! if you would but pardon me—if you would but hear me! (*gate bell rings without*) What's that about at this time of night? Oh! it's that idiot Simon; he said he was going to the park gates. Luckily there is no one to be disturbed here.

ADELAIDE enters, C. door, as an old lady.

ADELA. No, no, I don't want anybody to accompany me.

FRANK. (*turning*) Who's that?

ADELA. (*aside*) You will know presently. (*aloud*) Eh! a woman! what do you want here? who are you?

FRANK. For that matter, ma'am, who are you?

ADELA. Who am I! you ask me that! Don't you know I am the mistress of this house?

FRANK. (*aside*) My grandmother—phew! I should never have known her.

ADELA. And I should be glad to know what you are doing in my house at this hour of the night.

FRANK. (R. C.) Well, the fact is—(*aside*) The devil, though, I can't tell her in this dress that I am her grandson.

ADELA. (*going up*) If you don't answer, I shall call Simon to bundle you out.

FRANK. (*aside*) Ah! (*aloud*) I am the companion.

ADELA. You a companion at your age?

FRANK. Yes, ma'am, I am a widow.

ADELA. But Dunstable wrote to me that she was young and pretty; and you are as old as the hills.

FRANK. Oh, no ! but I have seen so much trouble.

ADELA. And you are ugly—downright ugly.

FRANK. Well, beauty is all a matter of opinion.

ADELA. And look here, what is this? (*taking Frank by the arm and making him pass before her*) Wine, cigars, a pipe, in my house! gracious goodness!

FRANK. (L. C.) I was going to tell you—it's your grandson.

ADELA. (R. C.) My grandson?

FRANK. Yes, Harry—he is here—and the pipe—(*aside*) I shall bolt. (*aloud*) I will inform him of your arrival.

ADELA. (*clutching his arm*) No, never mind, I shall see him to-morrow. (*looking at him and starting*) Why, can I believe my eyes? that's one of my gowns you have on.

FRANK. (*aside*) Oh, lord!

ADELA. And that is my bonnet.

FRANK. I'll tell you how it happened—

ADELA. And that mantle is mine, too.

FRANK. Well, as to the mantle—

ADELA. You are a pretty companion—you are a thief.

FRANK. A thief!

ADELA. Yes, one of the female swell mob. I'll send Simon for the police. FRANK runs off, c. door.

(*laughing*) Now, Mr. Harry, I think we are equal. It is too late to-night to go to the Golden Lion; so I will stay here, retain this costume, and—

FRANK. (*without*) My grandmother arrived!

ADELA. Ah! he is returning. I did not bargain for that. (*going over to L.*) But he will not suspect, and—

FRANK. (*running on, door c.*) Grandmother, grandmother, embrace your little grandson—let me kiss you, grandmother!

ADELA. (*retreating*) No, no, certainly not.

FRANK. Then you no longer love your little grandson?

ADELA. You are a wicked boy.

FRANK. Oh, grandmother!

ADELA. Poor Jane!

FRANK. (*aside*) Who is she, I wonder?

ADELA. After having been so long engaged to marry her, everything prepared, the wedding day fixed, all at once you write that you have altered your mind, and don't intend to marry yet awhile, leaving poor Jane to break her heart and die.

FRANK. Really, I am very sorry for poor Jane—though, 'pon my soul, I don't know who she is.

ADELA. Oh, Harry, Harry!

FRANK. Ah! I see how it is; you think I am Harry.

ADELA. Well?

FRANK. (*aside*) I am not going to answer for his evil deeds. (*aloud*) Well, I happen to be Frank.

ADELA. You are Frank!

FRANK. I am free to confess that I am, and the proof (*drawing papers from his pocket*) see—no, that is my tailor's bill; 'tis not at present receipted, but I depend on your liberality, grandmother——

ADELA. (aside) What does this mean?

FRANK. (*finding letter that has been given him by SIMON*) Yes, here it is; look at that; the letter which you wrote to me. (*reading*) "My dear Frank," you see, "your brother Harry is a bad fellow; tell him from us that unless he becomes within a week, the husband of poor Jane, we have done with him for ever."

ADELA. (aside) What do I hear?

FRANK. "For yourself, if you wish that I should still love you——" (*hugging ADELAIDE*) Oh, my dear grandmother.

ADELA. There, there; that will do.

FRANK. "You will also get married." Do you really wish to see me married?

ADELA. Well—I—that is——

FRANK. Well, grandmother, you won't have to wait long; there is now in this house a charming young creature, she arrived but this evening, yet——

ADELA. (astonished) And it is she?

FRANK. Yes, grandmother.

ADELA. You know her, then?

FRANK. Know her——

SIMON *staggers on, door, l., still drunk, and wearing morning gown, &c., and carrying cushion and bottle.*

SIMON. Sir, sir, your grandmother is returned.

FRANK. (R.) I know that, you fool, for here she is.

SIMON. (L.) Oh, but I mean the real 'un.

FRANK. The what?

ADELA. (C.) Can it be possible?

SIMON. Godfather has just seen them; the old coach broke down, the roads were so bad; so they have come back, and I was in the park, just going to bed——(*staggering, and trying to pull off morning gown—Exit, door C.*)

ADELA. (hastily snatching off her old woman's dress) Oh, heaven!

FRANK. Ah! you!

ADELA. Let me go, for now that I know your brother will really marry my sister——

FRANK. Poor Jane is your sister?

ADELA. Jane Stirling, yes.

FRANK. Oh, well, of course, it's a family arrangement, altogether—and you and I are bound to get married immediately.

ADELA. What do you say?

FRANK. The two weddings will make but one.

ADELA. Well, by-and-bye, we shall see, perhaps. (*bell rings*)

Enter SIMON, L., door.

SIMON. (*down, L.*) There they are, do you hear that?

FRANK. Simon, if you say a word about this night's proceedings, I will tell grandfather that you have been wearing his morning gown.

SIMON. Oh, sir, it was you that——

ADELA. (*crossing to SIMON*) And I will tell him you were tipsy.

SIMON. Oh, mum!

FRANK. Now, let us prepare to receive them.

ADELA. Yes.

SIMON. Oh, you needn't be in a hurry, they don't walk very fast, you will have time to get married, and to ask pardon for all your sins.

ADELA. (*to AUDIENCE*) More indulgence is always shewn to venerable age than is bestowed on giddy youth, and our great age, we think, deserves your consideration.

FRANK. (*as old woman*) Think of my eighty years, and be good children. Simon, 'tis now your turn to implore!

SIMON. My wife will be back directly!

FRANK.

ADELAIDE.

SIMON.

R.

L.

Curtain.